

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Romeo and Juliet



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Romeo and Juliet

William Shakespeare



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about the author

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, in Stratford-on-Avon, England, the third child of John Shakespeare, a well-to-do merchant, and Mary Arden, his wife. Young William probably attended the Stratford grammar school, where he learned English, Greek, and a great deal of Latin.

In 1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. By 1583 the couple had a daughter, Susanna, and two years later the twins, Hamnet and Judith. Somewhere between 1585 and 1592 Shakespeare went to London, where he became first an actor and then a playwright. His acting company, The King's Men, appeared most often in the Globe theatre, a part of which Shakespeare himself owned.

In all, Shakespeare is believed to have written thirty-seven plays, several nondramatic poems, and a number of sonnets. In 1611 when he left the active life of the theatre, he returned to Stratford and became a country gentleman, living in the second-largest house in town. For five years he lived a quiet life. Then, on April 23, 1616, William Shakespeare died and was buried in Trinity Church in Stratford. From his own time to the present, Shakespeare is considered one of the greatest writers of the English-speaking world.



William Shakespeare



Romeo and Juliet



Romeo and Juliet

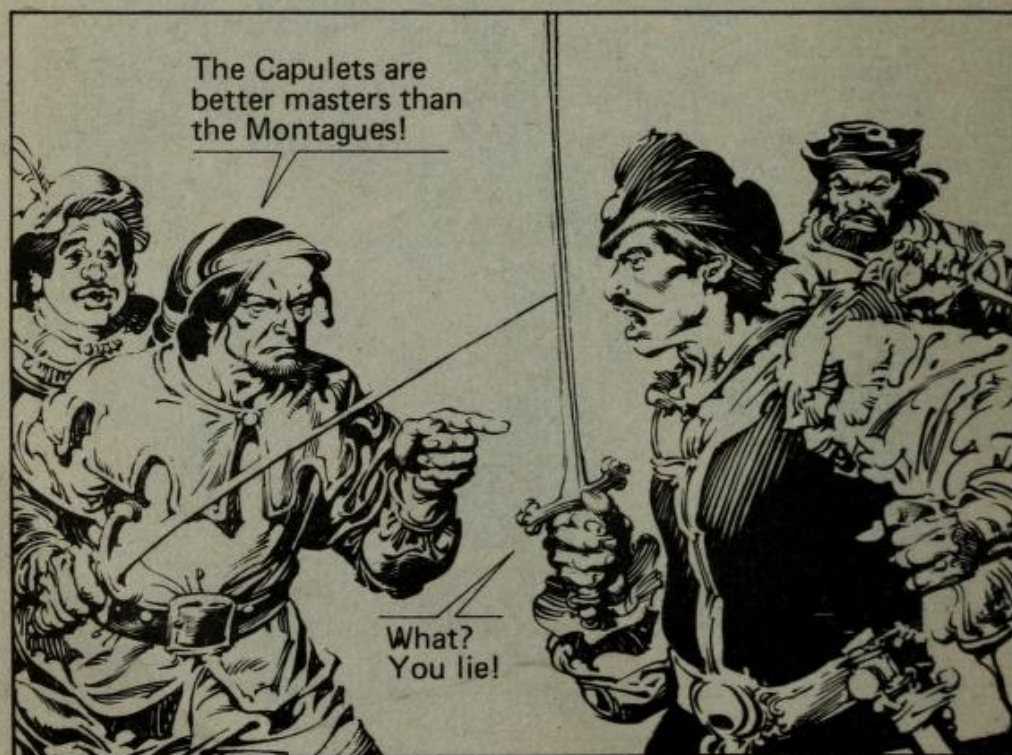
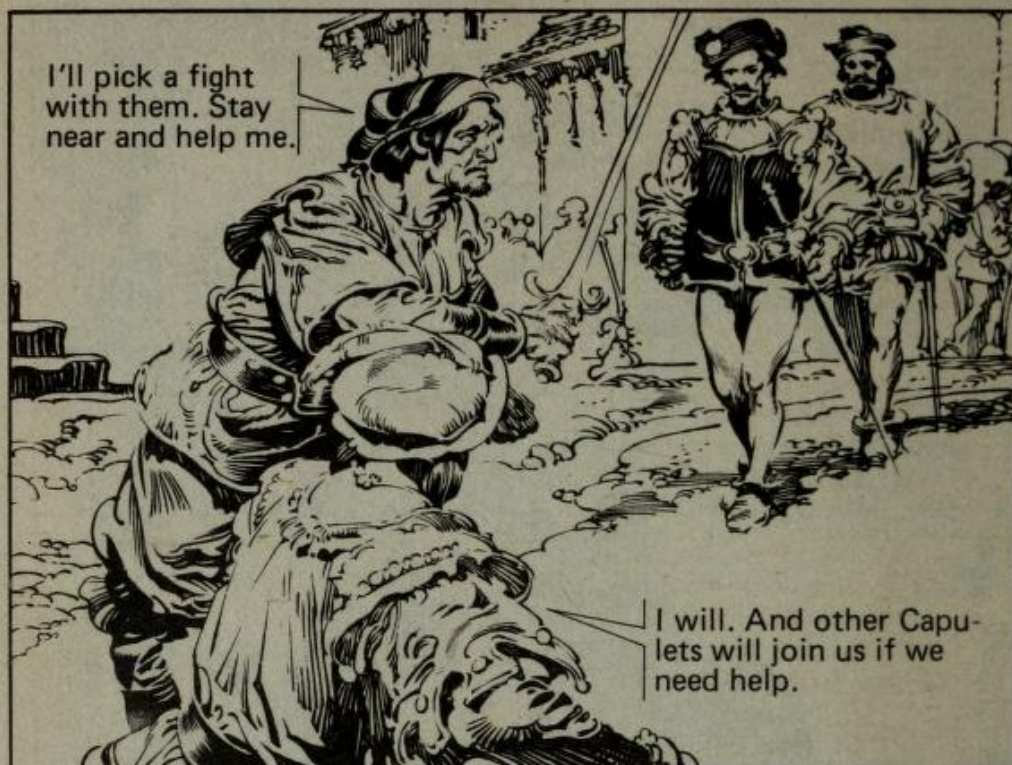
Many years ago in Verona, Italy, there lived two families who hated one another. The Montagues and the Capulets had been carrying on a feud for as long as they could remember.

If those Montagues should come by, I'll strike before they can run away!

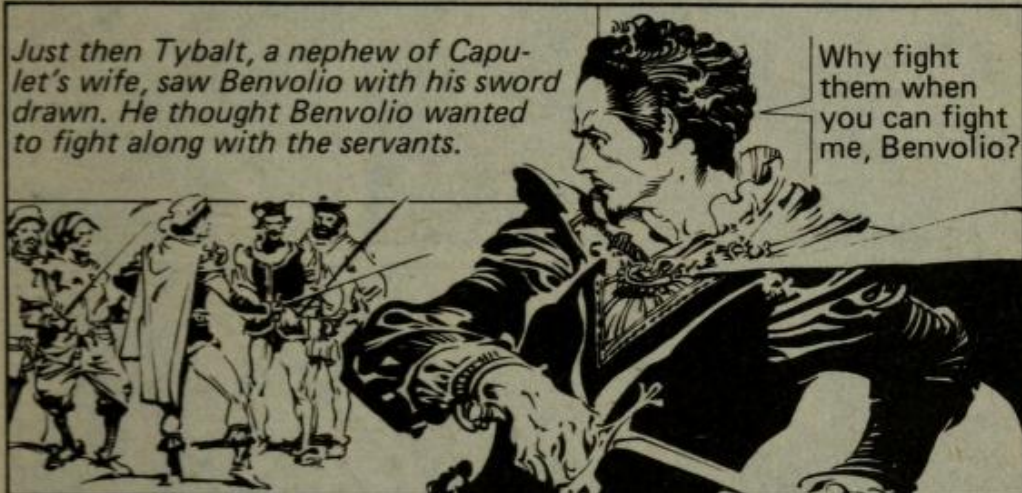
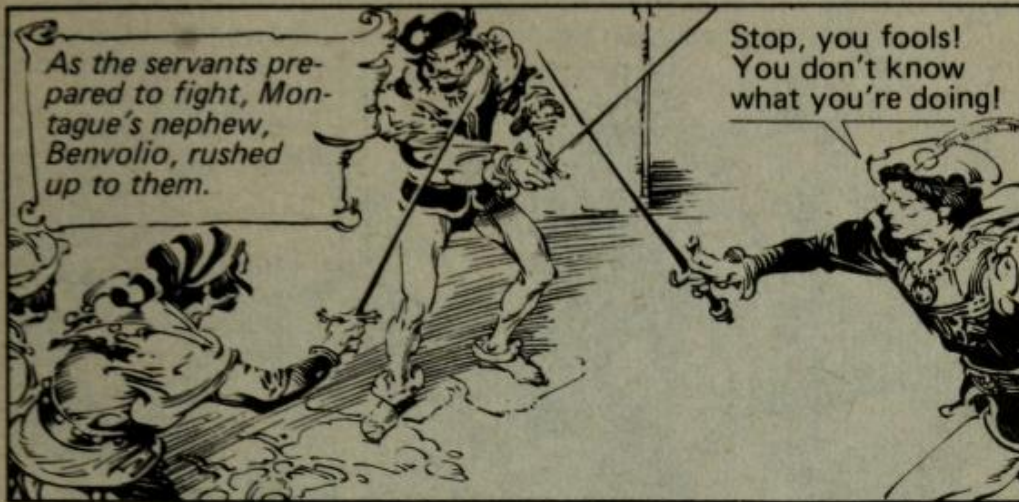
Then take out your sword, for two of them are coming now.

Sampson and Gregory were servants of the Capulets. They were just as ready to fight the Montagues as their masters were.

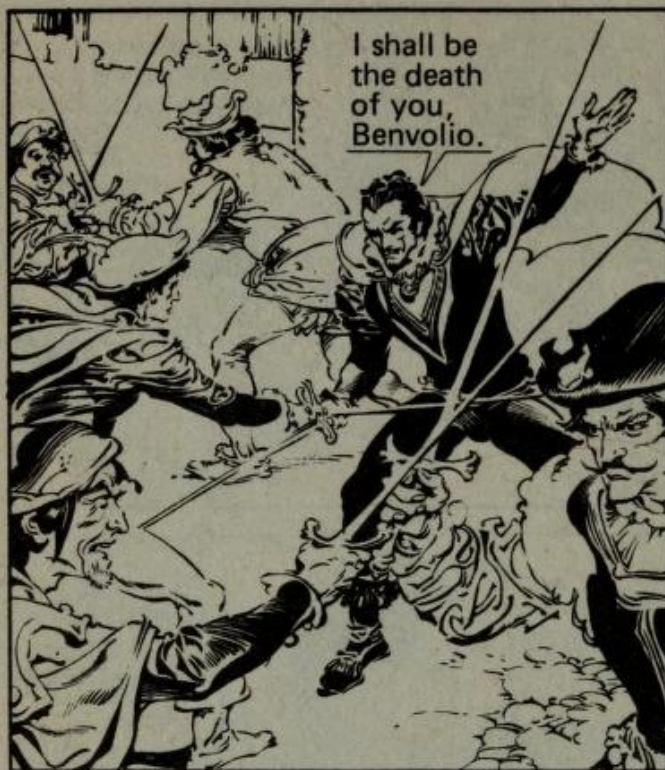
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Many good citizens of Verona were tired of the long feud. They rushed up to the fighting men.



Romeo and Juliet

Hearing the noise, Old Capulet and Lord Montague came out of their houses to see what was happening.



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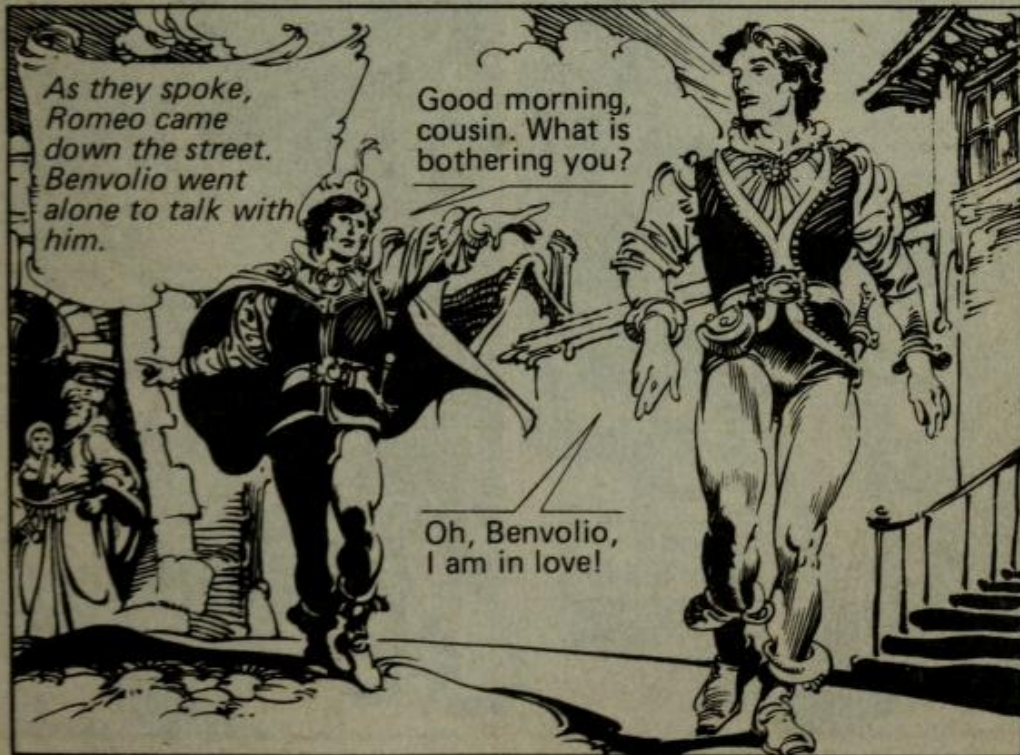


Romeo and Juliet

With this the prince left, and the people went back to their homes.



He has been doing that a lot lately, dear wife. He stays up all night long. And during the day he locks himself in his room.



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Romeo and Juliet

A short time later, Old Capulet met with the County Paris, a handsome and rich young man.

Sir, I would like to marry your daughter Juliet.

She is very young. But if she is willing, I will let you marry her.

Come to my feast tonight. You may see some other lady more beautiful than Juliet.

I will come, sir.

Old Capulet called his servant and gave him a list of names.

Go and invite all the people on this list to my home tonight.

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At his master's order, the servant took the list and left. But because he could not read, he had to stop someone and ask for help. As luck would have it, Romeo and Benvolio happened to be walking by just then.



As Romeo read the list for him, he saw that the name of the lady he loved was included.

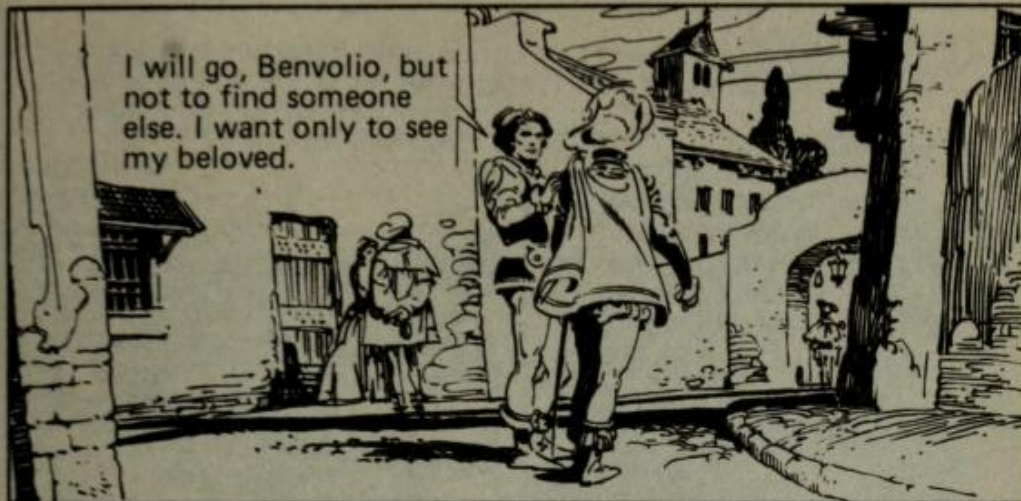


When the servant left, Benvolio quickly spoke with Romeo.

So your lady is on the list! Let us go to the feast tonight. I am sure you will see others there who are just as pretty. When you compare them, you will agree with me!



Romeo and Juliet



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Romeo and Juliet

That evening Romeo and Benvolio joined the other guests at the Capulets' costume party. Mercutio, another friend, went along as well.



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Some time later, Romeo arrived. Catching sight of Juliet across the room, he asked a servant her name.

What lady is that? She is very lovely.

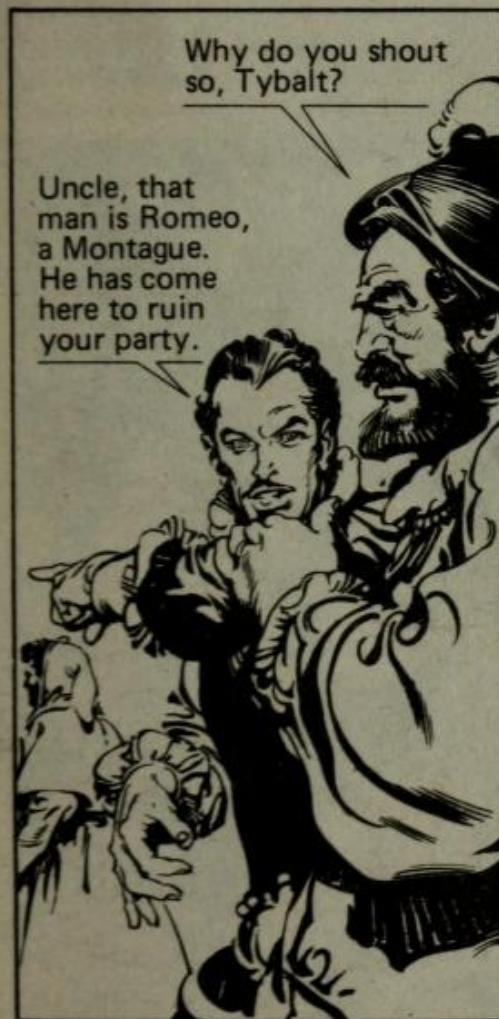
I do not know her name, sir.



She is like a snowy dove among dark crows. My heart has not known love until tonight!



Romeo and Juliet



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Romeo and Juliet



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Coming up behind him, Benvolio could tell that something had disturbed Romeo.



Let us leave now.

Yes, perhaps you are right.

As they walked to the door, Lord Capulet urged Romeo and Benvolio to stay. They refused.



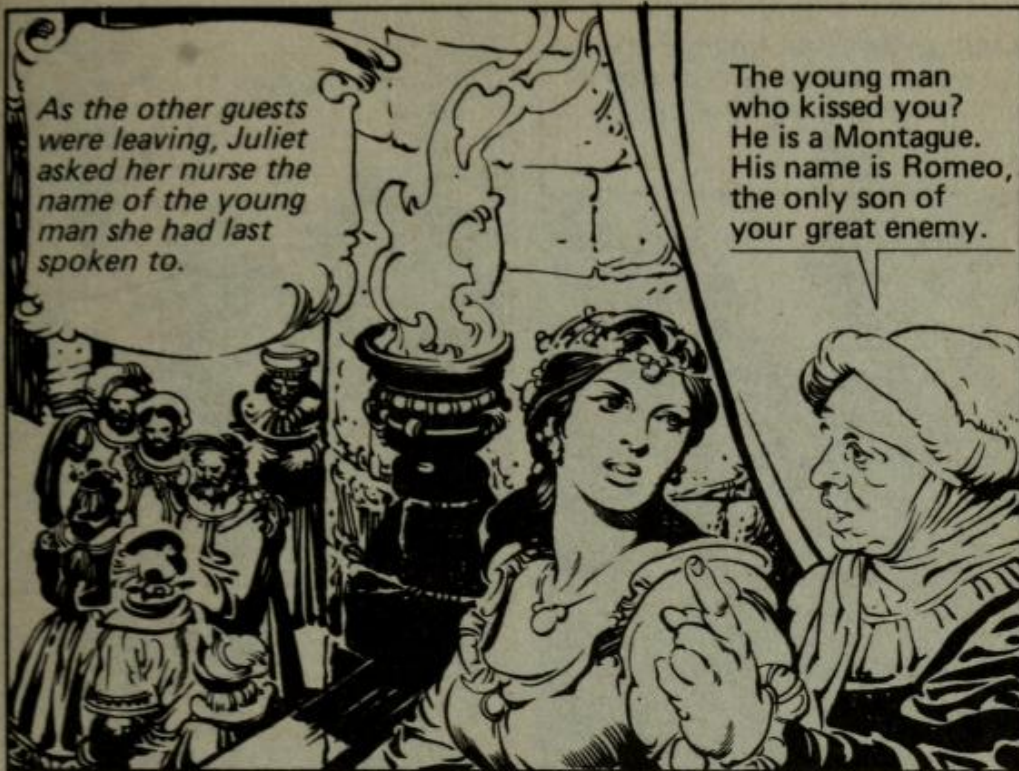
We must be going, good sir. But we are glad we came.

When the young men had left, Capulet realized that the party had gone on long enough.



The hour grows late and I must rest. Thank you for coming, everyone. Good night.

Romeo and Juliet



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Meanwhile, once outside, Romeo could not bear to go home without catching another glimpse of his beloved Juliet.

How can I go forward when my love remains here?



I must see Juliet again!



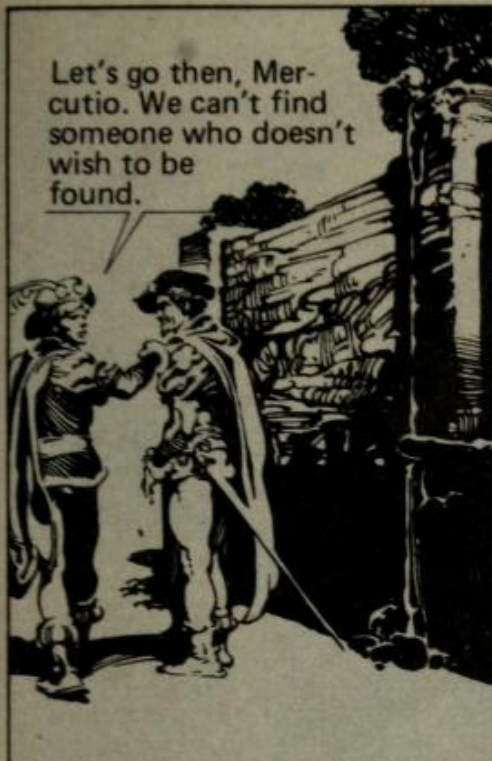
As Romeo disappeared over the garden wall, Benvolio and Mercutio came looking for him.

He ran this way. Call him, Mercutio.

I did, Benvolio. But he won't answer me.



Romeo and Juliet



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Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet spoke for a few moments of their love. Then Juliet heard her nurse calling at the bedroom door.



Good night, my love.



Romeo climbed back over the wall. Even though it was very late, he knew he would not be able to sleep.

I will go to see Friar Laurence and tell him what has happened.



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Romeo and Juliet



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Benvolio was the first to see his friend coming toward them.

Ah, here comes Romeo.

Good day to you both. Please forgive me for running off without you last night.



Just then Juliet's nurse and a servant walked up.

Can any of you gentlemen tell me where I might find Romeo?

I am Romeo.



I would like to speak with you in private, sir.



At this, Mercutio and Benvolio excused themselves.

We are going to dinner at your father's house, Romeo.



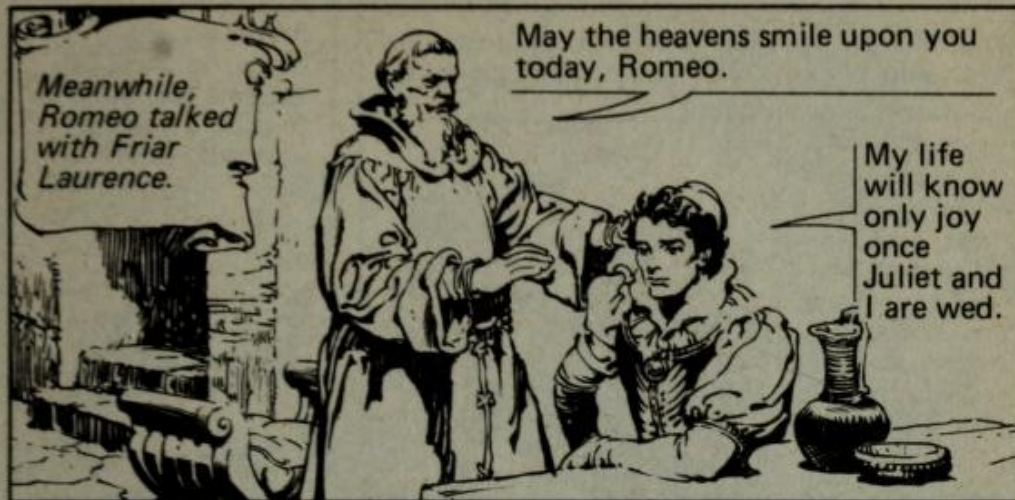
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Romeo and Juliet



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It grew very warm that afternoon, and Benvolio pleaded with Mercutio to go home.

I think we should leave, Mercutio. It is hot, and many Capulets are nearby. If we meet one of them, we will surely be in for a fight.



Come on, now, Benvolio. You use the smallest excuse to pick a quarrel yourself!



As they were speaking, Tybalt and some other Capulets appeared. Tybalt was looking for Romeo.

Here come the Capulets.



I don't care. Let them come!



Romeo and Juliet



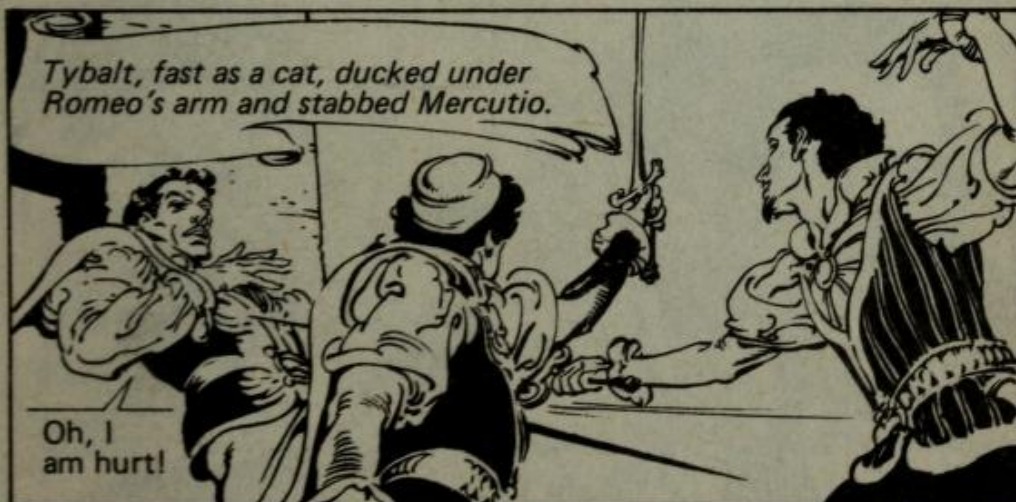
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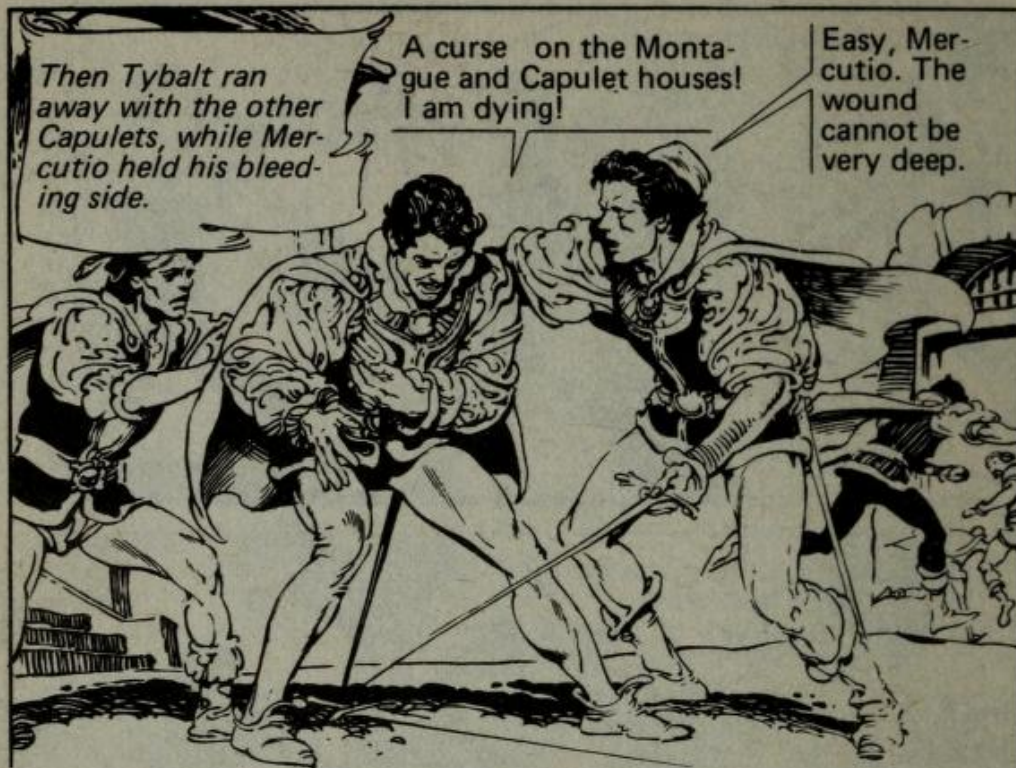
Hearing this, Mercutio thought Romeo was too love-sick to fight. He challenged Tybalt himself.



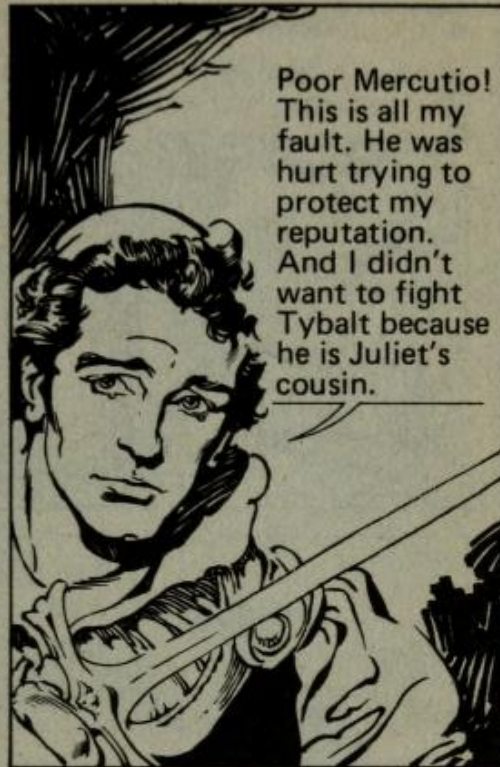
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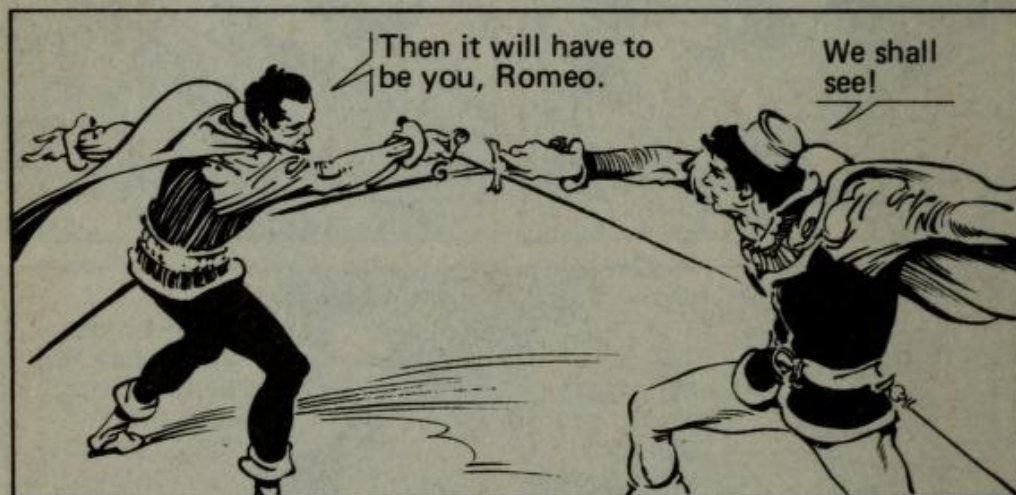
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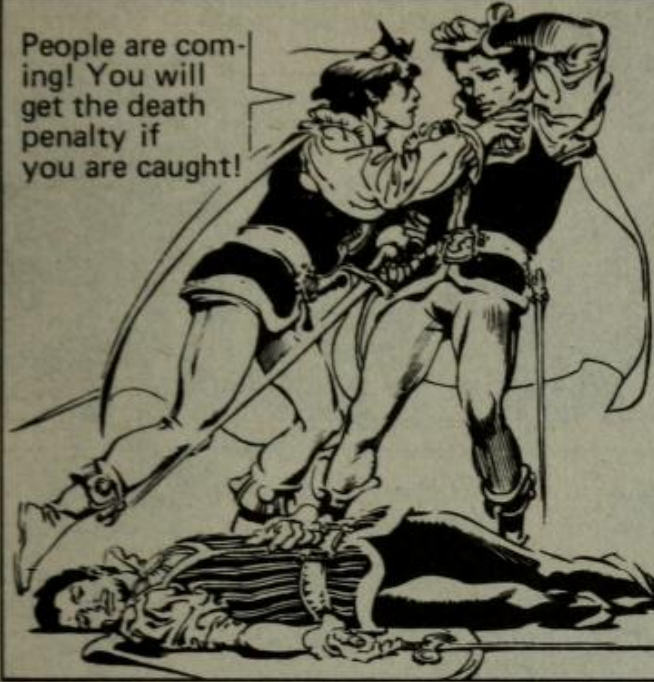
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Romeo and Juliet

Seeing this, Benvolio urged Romeo to leave.

People are coming! You will get the death penalty if you are caught!



Benvolio is right. I am a fool.



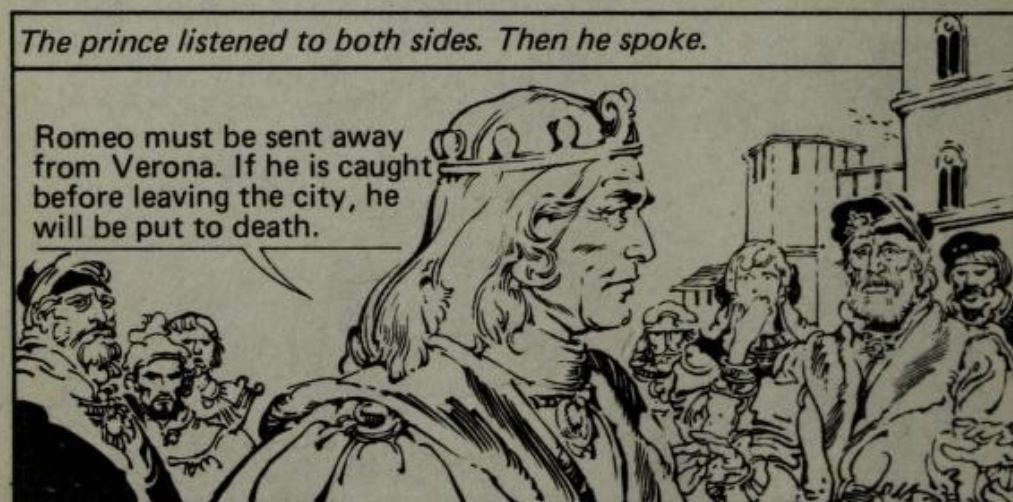
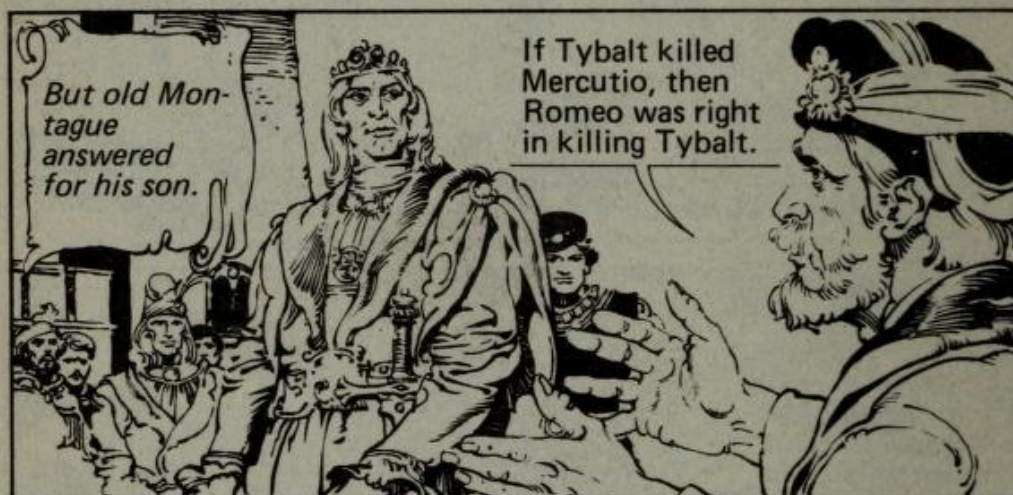
A crowd soon gathered. The prince himself came to learn what had happened.

Who started this fight?

Tybalt killed Mercutio, and Romeo fought Tybalt for doing it.



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Romeo and Juliet

Meanwhile, knowing nothing of what had happened, Juliet was sitting quietly in her garden.



Tonight
Romeo will
climb my
balcony,
and we will
be together!

Suddenly the nurse arrived carrying the rope ladder that Romeo would use. She was very upset.



What is
wrong,
nurse?

Tybalt is dead, killed
by Romeo. The prince
has sent your new
husband away from
the city!

At this, Juliet was
filled with grief.

If I cannot
have Romeo,
I will die!



No, Juliet. Do not
kill yourself. I know
where Romeo is hid-
ing. I will tell him to
see you tonight be-
fore he leaves.

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Romeo and Juliet



All this time, Juliet's father did not know his daughter was wed to Romeo. He made plans with the County Paris.



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You may take my daughter as your wife next Thursday. How does that sound?



Sir, I wish tomorrow were Thursday!

I will go upstairs and tell Juliet about this.

At this very moment Romeo was standing on Juliet's balcony.



Must you go so soon, Romeo?

Yes, my love. The birds are starting to sing and the sun is coming up. If I stay any longer I will be killed.

But I would gladly stay and die for you, Juliet, if that is what you wish.



No, no! You must leave!

Romeo and Juliet



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As Lady Capulet entered the room, she saw how sad Juliet was and thought she was still weeping at Tybalt's death.

I have good news, Juliet. To make you happy, we have arranged for you to marry the County Paris.

Oh, no! Mother, I will never marry him!

In a moment her father entered the room. Lady Capulet turned to him.

Juliet does not want to marry Paris.

What? You shall, Juliet, or I will send you out of this house!

Of course the Capulets thought they knew what was best for their daughter. When she would not do as they wished, they left her room angrily. Then Juliet found a way to get out of the house.

Nurse, I must go and see Friar Laurence. I have to tell him that I made my parents angry.

That's a good idea, Juliet.

Romeo and Juliet



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You will then be placed in a tomb. I will write to Romeo, and he will be there when you wake up.



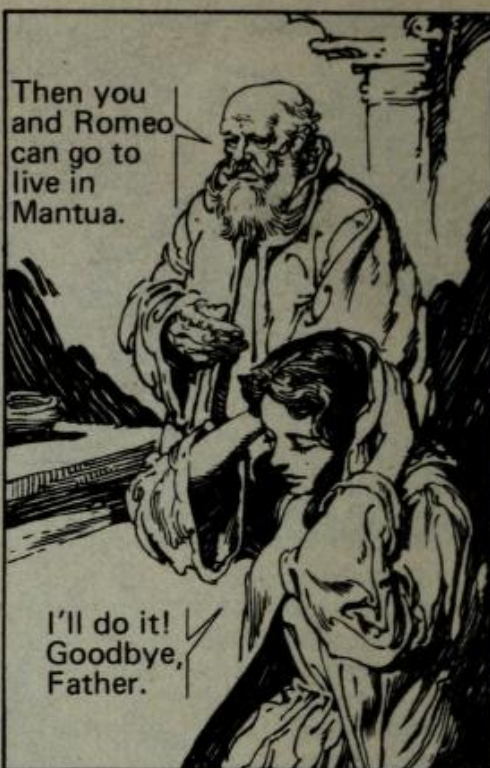
Juliet returned at once to her father's house.

Father, I met Paris in Friar Laurence's room. I believe he is a good man.



Then you shall marry him tomorrow instead of Thursday!

Then you and Romeo can go to live in Mantua.



I'll do it! Goodbye, Father.

Up in her room, Juliet drank the liquid Friar Laurence had given her.

Romeo, I do this to join you!



Romeo and Juliet



The next morning, the nurse
went to Juliet's room to prepare
her for the wedding.



Hearing the nurse's cries, Lord
and Lady Capulet rushed into
the room.



Downstairs,
the county
Paris waited
with Friar
Laurence.

Is the bride
ready to go
to church?



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Romeo was stunned at the news, but he made plans quickly.

Get some horses for us, Balthasar. We will leave for Verona tonight. Are there any messages from Friar Laurence?

No, none.



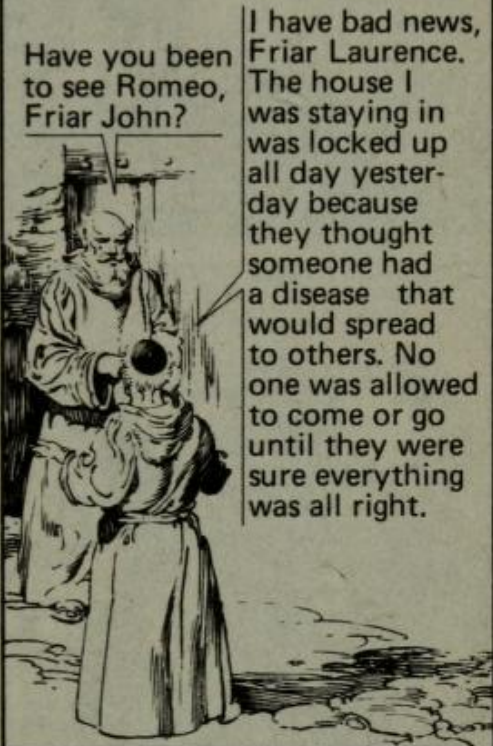
Romeo and Juliet



This is enough to kill twenty men.

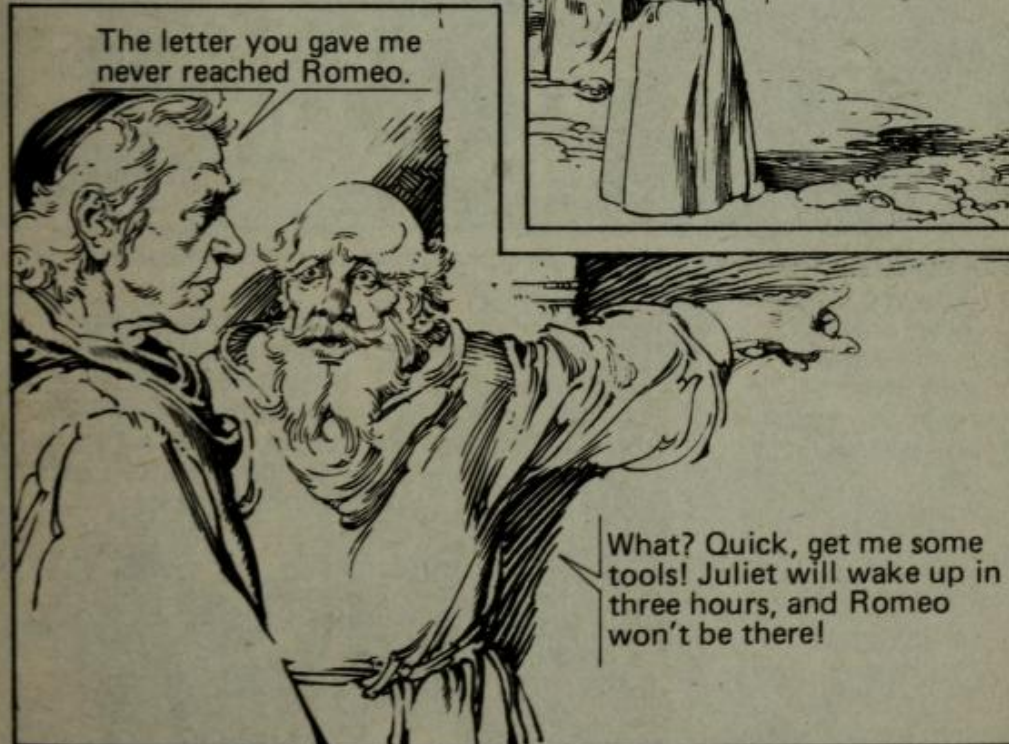
Thank you, sir.
Here is your money.

Meanwhile, back in Verona, Friar Laurence was very upset. The day before, he had written a letter to Romeo and had given it to Friar John. He thought Friar John would bring back an answer.



Have you been to see Romeo, Friar John?

I have bad news, Friar Laurence. The house I was staying in was locked up all day yesterday because they thought someone had a disease that would spread to others. No one was allowed to come or go until they were sure everything was all right.



The letter you gave me never reached Romeo.

What? Quick, get me some tools! Juliet will wake up in three hours, and Romeo won't be there!

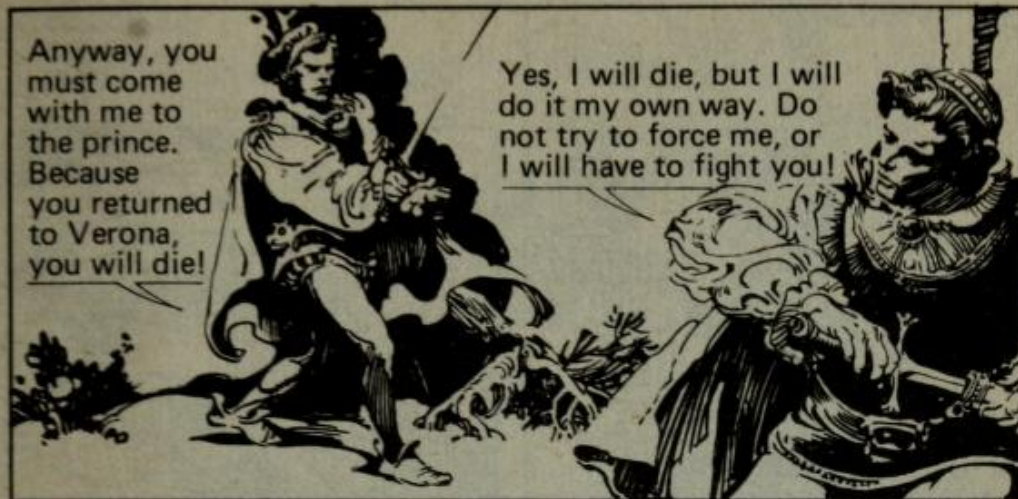
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Romeo and Balthasar drew near to Juliet's tomb. They had just arrived from Mantua.



Romeo and Juliet



But Paris would not listen. The two men fought, and Paris was killed.



Suddenly Romeo realized that the man he had just killed was Mercutio's cousin. Mercutio had been one of Romeo's best friends.

Now I know who this young man was.



Saying this, Romeo picked up the body of Paris and walked into the tomb.



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Just before he fell, he kissed Juliet one last time.



Moments later, Friar Laurence and Balthasar entered the tomb. Juliet had just awakened.



He is dead, Juliet, and so is Paris. Let us get out of here at once!



Romeo and Juliet

But Juliet was too shocked and sad to leave. Meanwhile, Friar Laurence was afraid to be found by the guards, and he and Balthasar left quickly.



With this, she took Romeo's dagger and plunged it into her heart.



Called by Paris' servant, several guards soon arrived at the tomb. Another guard brought Balthasar and Friar Laurence back.



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One of the guards went into the tomb and found the bodies. Meanwhile, Prince Escalus and the Capulets arrived.

Romeo and Paris are dead. And Juliet, who we thought was dead before, seems to have killed herself!



Balthasar and Friar Laurence were brought forward for questioning just as Lord Montague reached the tomb.

I will tell you what happened here, Prince Escalus. I secretly married Romeo and Juliet.



I tried to save Juliet from a second marriage by having her pretend to be dead. Romeo was to have taken her with him to Mantua. These deaths are all my fault.

I forgive you, Friar. You only did what you thought best.



Romeo and Juliet

At that Balthasar handed Prince Escalus the letter Romeo had given him. It proved what Friar Laurence had said was true.

You Montagues and Capulets! See what your fighting has done? First of all, Mercutio and Paris are dead.



The Capulets have lost Juliet and the Montagues have lost Romeo. All of us have been punished because of you!



And finally, at the prince's words, the two families realized how stupid they had been.

Montague, give me your hand. From this day forth our feud is over!

I give you my hand and more. We shall never fight again!

That is good! But for now, let us leave this place. The sad story of what happened here will remain with us always!



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